

PRESS

RELEASE



**3284 W Industrial Loop
Coeur d'Alene, Idaho 83815**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Gold Creek Ranch Awarded Working Forest Protection

(Coeur d'Alene...February 24). The Gold Creek Ranch Corporation, in partnership with the USDA Forest Service, the Idaho Department of Lands and the Clark Fork-Pend Oreille Conservancy, has permanently protected 643 acres of working forest from future subdivision and development under the Forest Legacy Program. Located northeast of Sandpoint, the property, owned by Jim and Virginia Wood, contains exceptional natural resource values of national, regional and local significance.

For over 70 years, the family has sustainably managed their forestland for timber production, cattle, and recreation, which have all contributed to the local economy. Protection of this property from development ensures continuation of these benefits to the community, as well as sustainability of forest resources, for generations.

The Wood family's desire to participate in the Forest Legacy Program arose from changes the family saw throughout rural Bonner County, where subdivisions, urban

sprawl and land development began to consume large contiguous tracts of productive forestland. The family's deep ties to the forest and concerns the land could someday be developed were reasons for placing a conservation easement on the ranch.

The project was sponsored and will be co-managed by the Clark Fork-Pend Oreille Conservancy (CFPOC), a non-profit land trust organization in Sandpoint. According to CFPOC, conservation of the Gold Creek Ranch, in its location next to the national forest, provides maintenance of a critical wildlife corridor and continued prime habitat for elk, moose, bear, native trout, and other wildlife.

Participation in Idaho's Forest Legacy Program is voluntary and does not infringe on the rights of private landowners. The program provides willing landowners a tool to ensure their forestlands continue to provide the conservation and forestry values for which their properties have traditionally been managed. A one-time purchase of the developmental rights by the State of Idaho, these conservation easements assure participating landowners, and the public, that the lands enrolled in the program will remain as working forestlands forever.

The Forest Legacy Program, a USDA Forest Service program administered in partnership with state governments, supports state efforts to protect privately owned, environmentally sensitive forests. To maximize public benefits, the program focuses on the acquisition of partial interests in privately owned forestlands to *keep working forests working*.

For more information about the Idaho Forest Legacy Program visit:

<http://www.idl.idaho.gov/>